

NEWS BRIEFING

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ARTHUR SYLVESTER

- - -
The Pentagon
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October 25, 1962

11:50 A.M.
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MR. SYLVESTER: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I have a statement here which will stand by itself.

QUESTION: Do we get copies?

MR. SYLVESTER: We will make copies available in time. We don't have any copies now because the statement has just been prepared this very minute.

QUESTION: Read it slowly.

MR. SYLVESTER: I will.

"It now appears that at least a dozen Soviet vessels have turned back, presumably because, according to the best of our information, they might have been carrying offensive materials. However, the first Russian ship that proceeded through the area patrolled by our Navy forces was a Soviet tanker. It was ascertained by the U. S. Naval vessel which intercepted her that the tanker had only petroleum aboard. Since petroleum is not presently included as prohibited material under President Kennedy's proclamation setting up the quarantine, the tanker was allowed to proceed. The Navy satisfied itself that no prohibited material was aboard this particular ship. This encounter took place shortly after 8:00 o'clock EDT this morning."

I shall not be able to enlarge on this, gentlemen.

QUESTION: Have you finished?

MR. SYLVESTER: I am finished.